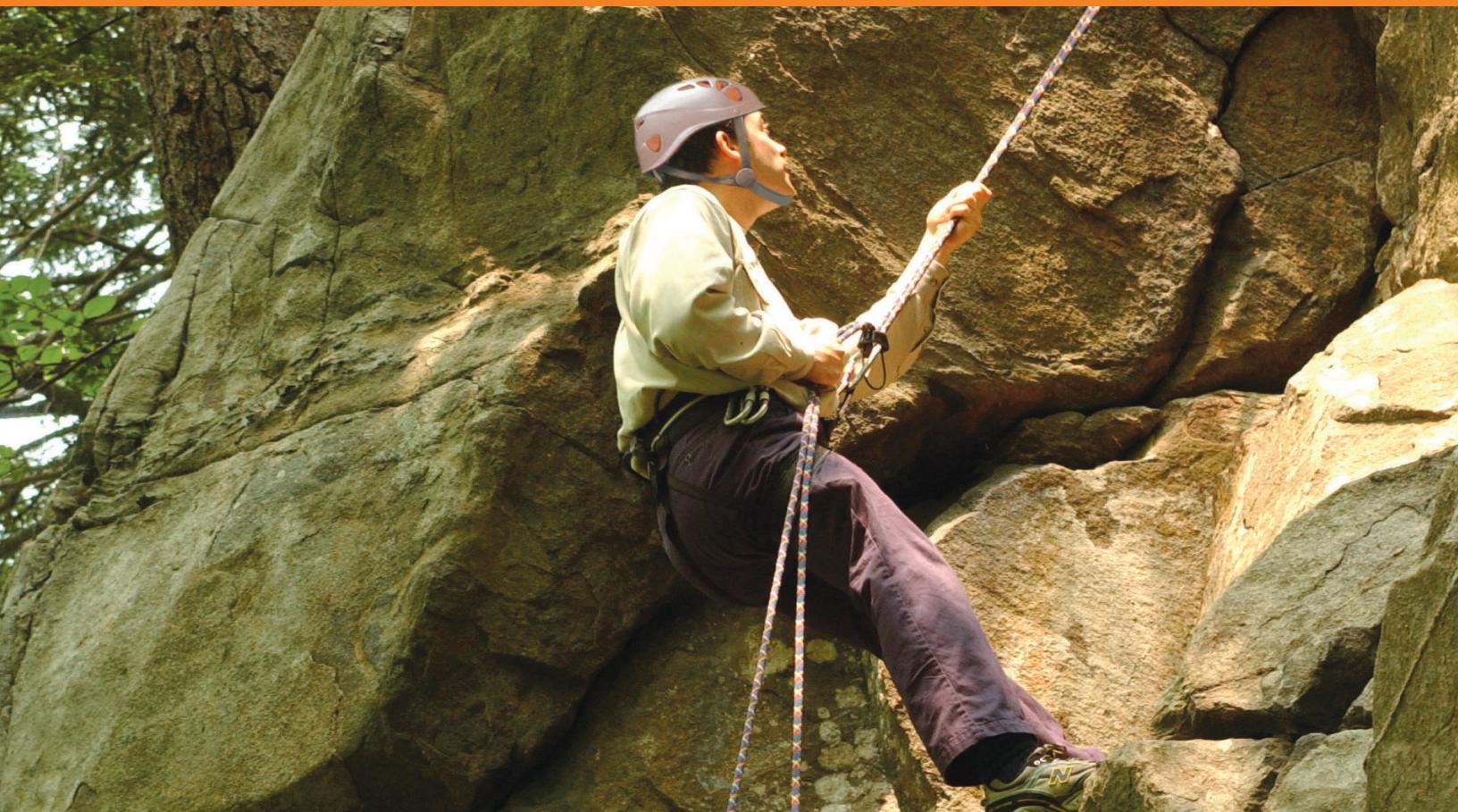


SAFETY GUIDE ROCK CLIMBING

RÉSEAU
Sépaq 



Rock climbing involves certain risks. This activity takes place in natural settings, which are consequently farther away from emergency services. This can cause delays in the event of incidents requiring immediate care or an evacuation.

Be sure you have the necessary skills and abilities and the appropriate equipment for practising this activity. Climbers must be aware of the potential risks, which include the possibility of material damages, injuries and death. We advise you to read this document attentively.

You should always choose an excursion based on your abilities, fitness level, rock-climbing skills, and how isolated the rock-climbing area is. Climbing routes are classified in terms of difficulty levels ranging from 5.0 (cliff with a gentle slope) to 5.15 (vertical climb). Climbers must therefore take these classifications into consideration when choosing this activity.

To plan your climbing excursion well, find out about the walking conditions of the approach trail and the levels of difficulty of the climbing routes by calling Fédération québécoise de la montagne et de l'escalade (FQME) at 514 252-3000, ext. 3733, or visiting their Web site at www.fqme.qc.ca.

It is important to note that during the approach walk, the climb and walk on top of the cliff, you are responsible for your own safety. There are no patrols on or around the climbing cliffs. Expenses for search and rescue operations are your responsibility (make sure that your insurance covers these risks before leaving on your trip).

We suggest that you read the *Careful by Nature* brochure, available at our reception offices, and give a friend or relative with a copy of your itinerary, making sure to let this person know your return date, with instructions to call emergency services (911) if you do not arrive on the expected date. To prevent false alarms, call this person as soon as you get back.

FORMALITIES

Before leaving, consult a guidebook describing the cliff or list of cliffs in the area you would like to visit.

You must have in your possession your park entry fee pass and stay authorization.

A climber who has had training on an artificial structure must take a transition course or rock climbing training before attempting to climb a cliff. This training, which includes first aid training, must be taught by a qualified instructor. You must also master and practice safety techniques including self rescue.

SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION

You must behave in a way that does not put your life or the lives of the other participants in danger. You must also show of ethical behaviour towards the other climbers.

Have emergency equipment on the climbing site, and make sure the necessary emergency measures are in place.

Tip

- The isolation of the areas and the topography of certain valleys limits the use of cell phones or satellite phones. Despite this fact, we recommend that you bring a communications device with you.*

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Even during the summer, weather conditions can change quickly from fair to difficult, especially in mountainous areas where it can get very windy. Temperatures can vary greatly in the same day.

Wet weather and temperatures close to the freezing point can increase the risk of hypothermia and death.

Tips

- Before your departure, it is important to check the weather forecast for the area you will be visiting.*
- Exposure to the sun can influence how comfortable your climb is. Wear sunscreen, sunglasses and light-coloured clothing. Also make sure to bring enough water.*

CLOTHING

Make sure to wear appropriate clothing. Keep some dry clothing on hand for rest periods and for when you are spotting your partner. The first indicator of hypothermia is trembling. Heed the warning signs! Dry clothing, a warm, non-alcoholic beverage and food are effective remedies.

Tips

- Take the multi-layer approach and avoid cotton clothing.*
- Be sure that the wrists of your undergarments and your socks are not too tight to avoid restricting blood circulation in your hands or feet.*
- Choose loose-fitting clothing that offers good protection for your lower back.*
- Don't tie your shoes too tight, because physical effort can make your feet swell, and as a consequence they can get cold more quickly.*
- In spring and fall, a tuque and gloves are often very much appreciated.*
- If your glasses get fogged up, this is usually a good indication that your body temperature is increasing too quickly. If this happens, you can reduce your speed, the number of layers of clothing, or simply ventilate your clothing to let some fresh air in.*

WHILE CLIMBING

Changes in weather conditions or your physical condition can greatly affect the level of difficulty and your climbing speed. Do not confuse difficulty with danger. Be prepared to retreat when faced with bad weather, injuries or other unexpected events.

Be sure to take your level of experience into consideration when you choose a route.

Tips

- Assess the quality of permanent anchorages before using them, and take this into consideration when choosing a route. You must also take your skills into consideration as well as the removable protection equipment you have with you.*
- Leave early, hike only in the daytime and with a group (min. 2 people).*
- Inform your climbing partners and any other climbers in the event of a rock slide.*

FOOD

If you eat well and stay hydrated, it will be easier to maintain a comfortable body temperature. This way, you will have more energy for climbing and be more alert when facing the unexpected.

Tips

- Be sure that your food and beverages are easy to reach during the climb.
- Find out about water supply facilities near the cliff.
- Drink a minimum of two litres of water per day.
- Eat and drink small amounts every hour during your climb.
- You can get water from various lakes, rivers and streams, but be aware that none of the water has been checked for purity. For your safety, we recommend that you boil, treat, or filter the water. Sometimes water that seems clean can contain harmful micro-organisms, which can cause gastro-intestinal problems.
- Never take or be under the influence of drugs or drink alcoholic beverages while climbing.

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

Use individual safety equipment approved by the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) or the European Committee for Standardization.

No matter what the brand name, model or price of the different technical equipment you use during your excursion, it is important to become familiar with them before your climb.

Tips

- Wearing a helmet is recommended at all times.
- A few days before your climb, simulate a departure by putting everything you are planning to take with you in your backpack. This is a good way to find out if everything fits into the backpack and how much weight you will have on your shoulders. This way, you can adjust your backpack or the logistics of your climb and reduce the weight or volume if necessary.

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

It is prohibited to blaze new climbing trails without Sépaq's authorization.

Hikers should carry all of their garbage out with them. This rule is in effect along the trails and in the camping areas.

The forest environment must be preserved, so do not cut or mutilate trees.

During your approach walk or climb, you will be travelling through the habitats of a number of wildlife species. By nature, these animals are not very aggressive, but if you try to get too close to them, their survival instinct could be expressed by dangerous behaviour.

Tips

- Avoid bringing useless packages that increase the weight and volume of your baggage.
- Use biodegradable soap and rechargeable batteries.
- Be sure to make the least possible impact on the environment during your stay.

WHAT TO BRING

FORMALITIES

Stay authorization (if necessary)	
Park entry fee pass	

SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION

Communication device (Cellular or satellite telephone)	
Sound-signalling device or appliance (whistle)	
Topo guide	

FOOD

Bring enough food for the trip	
Water filter	
Canteen for drinking water	
Thermos for hot liquid	
Camp stove and fuel (naphtha recommended)	
Kitchen utensils and mess kit	

TRAVELLING

Topographical map specific to your itinerary (in a watertight cover)	
GPS, extra batteries, instructions for use	
Compass with magnetic declination of the area visited	

METEOROLOGY

Thermometer	
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CLOTHING

Pants and jacket (external shell)	
Practical clothing (favour synthetics and multi-layering)	
Tuques	
Shoes for the camp	
Gloves	

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

Helmet	
Climbing equipment approved by the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) or the European Committee for Standardization	
Sun glasses	
First aid kit	
Sun screen	
Waterproof matches	
Multi-purpose knife	
Survival kit	
Backpack	
Personal items (toilet paper)	
Flashlight or headlamp and batteries	
Insect repellent (28% DEET)	

ENVIRONMENT

Biodegradable soap	
Bags for carrying out your garbage	
Rechargeable batteries	